

FUNERAL REFLECTIONS:

O R,

CONSCIENCE the loudest Knell.

A S A T Y R.

OCCASIONED BY

SEVERAL COMPLAINTS

(IN THE PUBLIC PAPERS)

F R O M

MARGATE in the ISLE of THANET,

Of the too long and frequent

TOLLING of the BELLS

A T

DEATHS and BURIALS.

“ Who fear where no Fear is”—and
“ Who flee when no Man pursueth.”

BIBLE.

“ Who start at FEATHERS from an Insect fly:
“ A Match for NOTHING but the—DEITY!”

Dr. YOUNG’S Sat. 6. P. 146.

L O N D O N :

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The P R E F A C E.

AS the Title-Page of this little Performance will sufficiently acquaint the Reader with the *Occasion*, so few Words will explain it's *Intention*, which indeed is little more than only to bespeak his serious Consideration on the innumerable but MELANCHOLY Consequences that must necessarily attend the following "*a Multitude to do Evil.*"

That *this* (besides their setting the PATTERN) is but the *too* distinguishing Character of the GREAT, is as conspicuous as the MISERY they complain of; and for which there is no other Remedy than by a Mortification of the Pride that despises it, to submit to the Advice of it's PHYSICIAN; 'tis Pity but such only were the SUFFERERS, as that possibly might work their AMENDMENT.

If the Reader then is one of these *Delinquents*, he may easily account for his own Unhappiness, and by a *Reformation* that will render him HONOURABLE, as easily escape the *Destruction*: besides enjoying through Life, that uncommon but invaluable Privilege of enforcing his *Advice* by his EXAMPLE.

One Thing indeed is to be fear'd—there will not be found many to *copy* it—GOOD EXAMPLES, if one may judge from *Appearances*, are by most People thought just *good for nothing*; however he will have this for his Comfort, that besides the Testimony of his own Conscience (an Approbation that is a *present* Reward) he will at a more IMPORTANT Tribunal, be not only *heard* but APPLAUDED!

I have now only just to observe, that tho' the *Style* of these Verses may be thought full severe for the *Provocation*, yet as their *Design* is BENEVOLENT, it is Pity that *Criticism* should defeat it; and as not to see the Misconduct of Mankind must be either Affectation or Stupidity: so to see and *not* enter our Protest must imply a Species of Indifference that borders on Guilt or BARBARIETY—" *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Brother,*" &c. being no less an Injunction of Humanity, than it is a Document of THAT Revelation whose Genius is UNBOUNDED Benevolence.

May the Reader then relish the REMONSTRANCE, and pursuing it, give the ALARM—as it not only concerns the TEMPORARY Welfare of a Kingdom—but relates to the Happiness of a FUTURITY that never can end but with the GOD of it!



FUNEREA REFLECTIONS.

PART I.

AT Morn we breathe, ere Night condemn'd we die,
 Lavish the Day, nor dream it's Exit nigh;
 Just as on this no more Importance hung,
 Than fairied Tales of Infant-Fairies sung.
 Borne on the Wing our Eyes indignant scorn
 The Shroud—the Grave—the Coffin, or it's *Urn*.
 The funeral *Knell* that strikes the conscious Ear,
 Is heard unfelt, or listn'd with a *Sneer*.

Some *Spirit's* gone—but whither it is fled,
 10 *How* left the World, or what announce the Dead,
 Who here can know—or knowing would declare,
 To damp the *joyous*, or deject the *Fair*?
 “How cruel this! Avaunt yon *pealing* Foe!
 “We've heard your *Song*, nor want we more to know,
 “As all beyond is Fiction in Disguise:
 “Religion, *Priestcraft*, and it's Verdict—*Lies*.
 “Cease then your Din, nor sullen grate our Ears,
 “With Sounds of *Sadness*—like the *Vale of Tears*.
 “The Thought's enough—pray, give this Tinkling o'er;
 20 “Hang up the Cord ^a, nor *malagride* us more.”

'Tis done—they pass—the Corpse to *them* unknown: }
 The Mourners walk—and let 'em still walk on: }
 These care not *who*—as neither yet their *own*.

^a The Bell Rope.

And yet how strange! this little *tinkling* Sound:
 This harmless *Knell* does every Bliss confound:
 Nor more by Reas'ning than Amusement drown'd.
 Vain every Effort from the Craft of *Fear*,
 To choak it's Eccho, or divert it's Ear.
 A magic Ghost—no magic Arts can charm:
 30 No *Spell* disable, and no Bribe disarm.
 It all defies, and equal laughs to scorn
 The melting Viol, or the clamorous Horn.

But hark! 'tis *mute*—but do it's *Vibrings* cease?
 Don't *these* remain, and TOMOHAWK your Peace?
 “ 'Tis Hyp—'tis Cold—'tis Vapours—it is”—What?
 Why—all you fear, and wish that it were *not*.
 The secret Sting of secret Dread betray'd:
 It *sounds* a Warning—if 'tis never *made*:
 As He ^b that gives it—gives it as his *Trade*.

40 What then the Cause? to trace is worth our while:
 That *that* which sooths, and oft makes *Sorrow* smile:
 Should thus disgust—nay, e'en with Pain torment
 The Proud—the *Good*—the Gay—the *Innocent*.
 There must be something—let who will abuse:
 That so *minute* can such Effects produce!

Ye Men of *Reason* who would deem it hard,
 To have it thought, ye were by *Nothing* scar'd:
 Yet *scar'd* ye were—while some OUTRAGEOUS storm'd:
 Address'd the Public and their Ears inform'd.
 50 Why hid the Cause? from *Policy* conceal'd:
 And now for once as candidly unveil'd.

Thus *Infant-Sages*, whom their Nurses wean,
 Shut both their Eyes and think their *Face* unseen.

^b The Sexton.

But seen ye *both*: And what is more—seen *thro'*:
Thin as disguis'd, and as *transparent*—true.

'Tis your own *Heart*—that Magazine replete,
With all that's vain, and all that's *meanly* great:
'Tis your own *Life*—that dissipated Scene
Of wild Uproar—Absurdity and Sin,
60 That flames *without* from Phrenzy's Flame within.
That restive *Spark* of self voluptuous Rage,
That glares a *Pantheon*, or that struts a *Stage*.

But PLEASURE's all! and Want of *Taste* the Crime:
And—" Who would censure what relieves from *Time*?
" That Weight ENORM! that dread, oppressive Load,
" That sinks Creation, and would sink a—*God*!
" Tremendous CRUSH! that better than sustain:
" Mankind were *Monsters*, and their Sphere the *Main*!"

P A R T II.

THUS reason you! whom Reason seems t' have left,
Of all but *Face* and human Form bereft.
How just Return! such Treachery to leave,
To Schemes, that plague and Systems that deceive.
Else ye *must* know the END for which was giv'n.
What *meet* improv'd—improves a Hell to Heaven.
Or sad Reverse! as your own *Feelings* tell,
Perverts the Scene, and turns that Heav'n to *Hell*!

So every Gift as every Grace bestow'd:
10 The Boon of Nature or the Gift of God:
Each in their Place fulfil their dread Intent:
Impress our Peace or stamp it's Punishment.

But *can* it be that after all we've heard,
Such Men as you can by a *Sound* be scar'd!

That such as you should sicken at a *Knell* :
 'Tis *Mystery* sure—if not a MIRACLE !

Ye Men of *Wit* ! who breathe a *filter'd* Air,
 With *Hobbes*—with *Hume*—with Atheists and *Voltaire* :
 Can none of these an Antidote supply :
 20 To “ *save the Sons of TERROR from to die ?*”
 Can none of these afford one single Prop,
 To stay your *Firmness* or support it's *Hope* ?
 Can none of these *one* Argument produce
 To stamp PROBATUM on it's sacred Use ?
 They cannot *one*—not e'en their OATH avails :
 Where all must sink if what they banter^a—*fails* !

Yet this is *Life* !—and by *your* Practice giv'n,
 To serve CORRUPTION and then *merit* Heav'n !
 What Wonder then—(but can ye bear the Words ?)
 30 That Knells are *Thunders* and their Lightnings—*Swords* ?
 While every Art—nay, e'en your Art to hide,
 But galls your Wishes as it galls your Pride :
 'Till Death dispatch—or SUICIDE decide. }

Luxurious Arts ! the Bane of *moral* Sense :
 Ambition's Swell or Burst of Opulence.
 That saves no Labour and that spares no Price :
 T' improve a Fashion or import a *Vice*.

Your Plea as base—“ *It serves the public Good.*”
 Does what INFLAMES then *mitigate* the Blood ?
 40 “ *It scatters Riches and inspirits Trade :*”
 “ *The Naked Covering and the Hungry Bread :*”
 This all *sounds* well—but *sounds* it not a *Curse*,
 If spoil'd the Virtuous and the Bad made worse ?

^a DIVINE REVELATION—equally the SCORN and TERROR of these ILLUSTRIOUS Champions in the Science of Scepticism and Blasphemy—the former has been dead near these 100 years—the two last are still suffered to exist as MONUMENTS of the MERCY they LAUGH at.

INFERNAL Plea! while such EXAMPLES stand:
To spread (like *Pests*) Infection thro' the Land.
Cease then from *these*—or never more pretend
Yourself of *Cæsar* or the PUBLIC's Friend.

Thus far digress'd—we here afresh return:
And fresh renew'd, afresh reflective mourn,
50 Another Reason for those Horrors give,
That last your Life, and then FOR EVER live!

Here then it lies—not one of you but *feel*,
And but for Shame—or Shame's Award could tell,
What drawn a *Portrait* would *pourtrait* a HELL! }

That then is rung that *wrings* the very Heart:
Guilt's biting Anguish at Reflection's *Dart*,
A secret *Jar* that shocks your inmost Soul:
Drawn with the *Cord*, and answ'ring to it's *Toll*.
Internal Knell! that peals a sad Rehearse:
60 While nameless Fears with nameless Sorrows pierce.
Struck home a Truth that strikes the *sensual* Breast:
Unmans it's Courage and *unmasks* it's Rest.
Proves what is heard is like a *Signal* blown
To make us hear—till heard it as *our own*!

P A R T III.

BUT come—a Moment—and we'll ease your Task:
Hear then the Muse in milder Accents ask.

Say then no *Knell*—no doleful *Peal* should ring:
Nor stalking Ghost the Midnight-Message bring:
Will that prevent or this extract the *Sting*? }
Ye know it can't—your Conduct *lives* the Proof:
Your every Art to hide or drive aloof
That Foe of *Thought*, that like a Poniard steel'd,
Recoils a Force—redoubl'd as repell'd.

10 In vain your Strife—in vain your Cob-web Schemes:
Your Noon-Day *Visions* and your Moon-light Dreams, }
To stem the *Torrent* or divert it's Streams.

It's

It's Tide revolts and as a Deluge flows;
 O'erwhelms each *Babel* and each Mound o'erthrows.
 Plucks from it's Hold the *Anchor* of your Joys:
 Disparts its *Cable* and its Strength destroys.

Say still nought heard but the sweet *Syren* Tongue:
 The ^a *Æolian* Viol or the Charmer's Song:
^b *Corelli's* Thunders—more than half-divine:
 20 That shook the Spheres and raptur'd all the *Nine* ^c:
 Could these or lull your Wretchedness to sleep:
 Or bid your Fears a *trembling* Silence keep?
 Not one avail—while heard distinct *within*,
 Guilt's louder Marmur at the *Face* of Sin!

Say—could the Clappers of ten thousand *Bells*:
 Or all the Clang of twice ten thousand *Knels*,
 More horrid peal—or Sounds more horrid break,
 Than *these* would utter could their Language speak?
 Would it not seem, if *these* might once be heard,
 30 As Hell *unbosom'd* and her Gates unbarr'd?
 Where tortur'd Fiends in torturing Anguish moan:
 And howl in Chains their unremitted Groan?
 Would not the *Charmer* and the *Syren* Tongue,
 Sound more like BELLOWING than the Voice of *Song*?
 Cecilian Notes of soft melodious *Lyræ*,
 As Shrieks of Victims on the Racks of Fire?
 Each Note a Burst of Thunder at the Ear:
 That peal'd PERDITION as it peal'd Despair!

What mean ye then thus fullen to repine:
 40 Or meaner still like whim'ring Infants *whine*?
 Has then your *Stupor* never heard before
 These *latent* Thunders from their Caverns roar?

^a *Æolus'* Harp an Instrument of Music, whose Sounds are produced by the passing of Wind over it's Strings.

^b A famous Composer in the Beginning of the last Century, whose Works and Memory will live as long as TRUE Taste and Harmony exist.

^c The *MUSES* so called from their NUMBER.

Ne'er have ye heard *Compunction's* plaintive Din :
 Or felt it's Clamours at the Sight *within* ?
 Nor that small Voice *instinctive* in your Breast :
 So oft returning and as oft repress :
 That Voice of Wisdom calling to her Son :
 " Give me *thy* Heart—and mine is all thine own ! "

If ne'er ye did—'tis Time that *something* shou'd
 50 Unlock your Horrors and *unfreeze* your Blood.
 Your Sleep arouse—your Slumbers disconcert :
 To probe your Danger as it probes your Heart.
 Cut to the Quick and bar'd your ev'ry Thought :
 Left ripe for Vengeance into Judgment brought,
 Ye grasp the Bar as Vessels of it's Doom :
 For deeper Death and deeper Wrath to come !

P A R T IV.

HAIL ! kind ALARM ! whose *Terrors* bid you seek,
 Peace with the *Pure*, and Mercy with the *Meek* !
 Search for Delights ye never yet have found
 'Midst Folly's Madness or the madd'ning Round
 Of *frantic* Joys that vanish e'er you seize :
 Fly your Embrace and *plague* you as they *please* :
 Whose phantom'd Forms elude th' expectant Eye :
 Implunge their STING and as *avenging* Dye.
 Leave you to reap the Harvest of your Shame :
 10 While Disappointment but renews the *Flame* !

Thus fed with Husks, immortal Spirits faint :
 Curse the Supply and then accurse it's *Want*.
 Wonder the Cause that after all their Pain ;
 The Prize still distant and it's Hope still vain.

Like peevish Children that seek something *new* :
 And this indulg'd some other Toy pursue.
 Eager to catch the present as the past :
 They *gape* their Wishes and then gasp their *Last* !
 By sudden Death or lingering Pain remov'd,
 20 From all they hated as from all they lov'd :

They

They *die* to know—what should *before* been known,
 “ That Loss of GOD—is Loss of ALL in ONE !”

Thus long delay’d—too long alas! deferr’d,
 Ye call unanswer’d and implore unheard.
 Then shall ye wish—but ah! shall wish in vain,
 That Life restor’d, ye might re-hear again,
 With *willing* Ear, the Sounds ye would *erase*,
 And in that Sound the *Clarinets* of Grace.

Now heard no more! your *Doom*—your own *DESIRE*.
 30 “ Grant us but this—’tis all our Wants require.
 “ *Let us alone*—“ nor more our Quiet peal,
 “ With Sounds as *odious* as the Sound of *Hell*.
 “ Hence then for *Love*—let every *Troubler* cease:
 “ And tho’ we *perish*—let it be in *Peace* !”

’Tis done—ye shall—only remember this;
 ’Twas you that ask’d—’twas you that wish’d *amiss*.
 So where *they* go, whose Sins are gone before:
 Shall ye go down to re-ascend no more!
 Is this your Fate?—and can ye then resent
 40 The Love that warns—the Hand that would prevent
 Your *final* Loss?—Is Insult a Return,
 For Sighs that weep, and nameless Pangs that burn?
 But such your Pride! that Gulph of Wretchedness!
 That stains your Life and poisons all its Peace.
 That Serpent dire—that restless Worm *within*:
 That gnaws your Vitals as it *feeds* your Sin!

Still fond to live—yet curs’d the Parent-womb:
 Afraid to die—yet invoke the Tomb!
Delirium-MAD! of more than *Lunar*-stille:
 50 Can Grief refrain? or *Sense* forbear to smile,
 To hear your *Moans* and yet your *Nonsense* see?
 The *true* *SUBLIME* of *Self-Absurdity* !

What need we more?—must not all Arguing fail,
 Where neither *Hope* nor *Menace* can prevail?
 Where all is senseless—or all *Sense* *OBDUR*’D:
 E’en Conscience *BEGGAR*’D and its Light obscur’d!

P A R T V. AND LAST.

MUST then all Suit—all fair Remonstrance cease?
 The Means of Mercy as the *Bane* of Peace!
Must ye have Rest till that sad Hour arrive,
 When keener *Pains* and keener *Pangs* revive?
 The dreaded Moment of unwelcome Death,
 That stops all Reas'ning as it stops your Breath.
 When all is Doubt or Darkness to the *Blind*:
 'The *proud* of Heart or profligate of Mind.
 The greedy Sons of MAMMON's *golden*-Cheat,
 10 The immers'd in Pleasure or profane of *Wit*.
 Who shudder more the Tinkling of a *Bell*:
 Than Children *Spectres* or it's *Ghost* the Cell.

Must all this be? then hark! *unheard* before:
 Another *Peal* and *other* Thunders roar.
 THUNDERS! whose Voice shall rive old CHAOS' Bed:
 Call up the Living and convoke the Dead.
 Drive to the Bar the *Felons* of their Tomb,
 With these to hear—with these divide their Doom!

“ Go ye from ME—from ME ye *accursed* go:
 20 “ To *endless* Griefs and everlasting Woe!

“ Go ye from hence—where Hope shall never come:
 “ To endless Shades of everlasting Gloom!

“ Go ye from hence—ye Victims of mine Ire:
 “ To endless Chains and everlasting Fire!”

Hear then ye FOOLS! who *redden* at a *Spell*:
 And serious ask'd—your Thoughts as serious tell.

Say if you can—where now will you appeal?
 Or *whom* accuse the CAUSE for which you feel
 These new-born Terrors at that TRUMPET's Sound,
 30 That rends the Rocks and jarrs the cleaving Ground?

You now *confess*—tho' once your *wanton* Pride
 Avow'd in Act what yet it's *Words* denied:
 Your Bosom Sin—the Sin your Bosom lov'd:
 Who died unchang'd for living unprov'd.

Not so the Men your Wit has oft *revis'd*:
 With Scorn rejected—as with Hate despis'd.
 Sport of your Mirth—but Terror of your *Name*:
 Who bare your Burden as they bore it's Shame.
 Whose Zeal ye flouted—as Enthusiasts deem'd:
 40 Their Message slighted: and their GOD blasphem'd.

Not so the Men of Innocence or Grace:
 Whose *Doubts* were WONDER and that Wonder—PRAISE!
 Who, tho' in Darkness, yet eschew'd the *Night*:
 Their *Dawn*—Salvation, and their *Evening*—Light.
 To whom of GRACE the NOBLER Bent was giv'n:
 Here to pursue and there assume their Heav'n!

WHERE—might this Prayer—this Wish benign aspire
 Yourself should rank the FOREMOST of it's Choir.
 High in HIS Strength—as in his FORM compleat!
 50 Whom Angels WORSHIP and Archangels GREET.
 Sav'd by a Grace to all but HEAV'N unknown:
 And THOSE whom Heav'n *vouchsafes* to call it's OWN?

Such the Distinction that subsists between
 This World of *Vision* and the Worlds UNSEEN!
 Where ALL is real that can real be:
 Existence LIFE—and Time ETERNITY!

THE END.